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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
28 August 1952 - 11:00 A. M.

COMMENT ON SURPRISE DISSOLUTION OF JAPANESE DIET: The
decision of Prime Minister Yoshida to dissolve the Japanese
Diet is in part a recognition that he no longer can resist
pressure from both within and outside the Liberal Party for
early general elections. The apparently sudden decision
for a dissolution now, rather than in late September as
previously planned, represents strategy probably designed
to preserve Yoshida's declining personal strength within
the party, as well as to favor the Liberal Party position.

The decision enables the government to forego the
present Diet session, which opened on 26 August. The
Opposition was planning to utilize this session for a con-
centrated pre-election attack on Yoshida's policies. The
surprise action of Yoshida also leaves the Opposition parties
with inadequate campaign preparations; this will react in
favor of the present better known incumbents, a majority
of whom are Liberal Party members. An added factor may
have been a desire on the part of Yoshida to stem the grow-
ing strength of the rival Hatoyama faction within his own
party.

The election, which is now scheduled for 1 October,
will be the first test of strength for the Liberal Party
since the conclusion of the Peace Treaty and the Security
Pact. With US-Japan relations a primary issue, the results
will serve at least as a partial indicator of the electorate's
attitude toward Yoshida's pro-American policies. It will
also provide the first opportunity for the wartime leaders
to regain their Diet seats following their forced retirement
from politics by SCAP's purge directives.

Yoshida has suffered a personal decline in popularity
over recent months, and it is probable that this will be
reflected in the election results. None of the Opposition
parties, however, appear able to challenge seriously the
dominant Liberal Party, which currently holds 285 of the
466 seats in the Lower House.

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